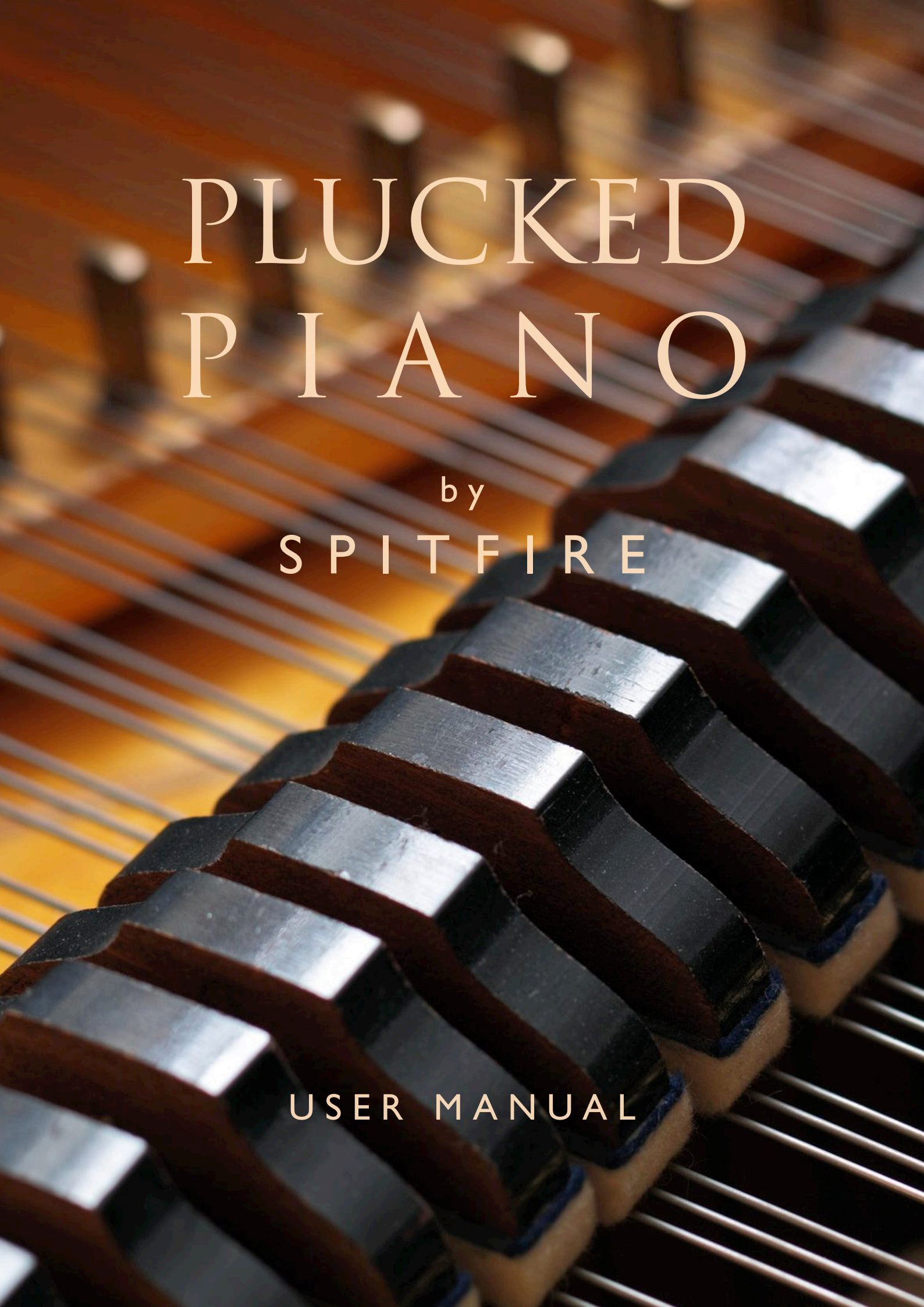

PLUCKED PIANO

by

SPITFIRE

USER MANUAL

Welcome.

Thanks for being part of the Spitfire Audio project.

We've tried to make this as brief and interesting as possible but we also understand that reading manuals is a bore, so stick this next to your loo and give it a read whenever you can.

About Spitfire:

Spitfire was formed in 2008 by a group of successful British composers as a means of producing the tools they needed for their busy work schedules. Sick of dry, humourless, ugly, unrealistic sounding libraries, Spitfire set about redefining the way samples were created.

Our aim is to reproduce the conditions of top movie recording sessions and approach sampling as if we were recording a film score one note at a time. To record performances, and parts thereof, not scientifically created samples. To capture the timbre of a world-class set of players but also to record the room they were playing in.

If you are wanting perfectly tuned, normalised or "dry" samples you have probably come to the wrong place. For here you may find the odd string squeak, a "fruity" note, and lots and lots of "room" but put the whole package together, write some fierce music and suddenly this library and our approach will make perfect sense.

About Plucked Piano

As composers we're always on that quest to find a "lead" string instrument that does the job of a piano, harp, or guitar without sounding like one, without having the stereotypical association. Or indeed that can play like a dulcimer or cimbalom, but doesn't have the geographical connection or insinuation. So spitfire took quarter of a million pounds worth of concert grand heard on countless film, scores from Harry Potter to Inception, and... well, we plucked it.

Recorded by Jake Jackson at Lyndhurst Hall - Air Studios, on one of the finest scoring stages in the world, through an array of priceless vintage microphones via Neve "Montserrat" pre-amps, to a beautifully serviced Studer 2" tape machine and then into digital at 96k via the best Prism AD converters: this is an unparalleled signal chain.

We've sampled the full range of the piano diatonically with two pluckung styles; finger pad and nail with a selection of mic positions for you to mix to get up front and personal. Or a more contextual perspective that will mix seemlessly in with your Albion and BML ranges of orchestral tools. What's more we've included both direct and tape signals for if you'd prefer pristine and clean to that rounded top and tidy bottom of tape!

System Requirements

KONTAKT - PLUCKED PIANO IS NOT A KONTAKT PLAYER LIBRARY, PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A FULL VERSION OF KONTAKT. Please also make sure you have the absolute latest version. 98% of all enquiries to our support dept' are cured by the upgrade. This is a cutting edge library and it simply won't work on anything but the latest version.

RECOMMENDED SPEC:
The better your computer, the better the performance of the Plucked Piano. But not to worry if you're not spec'd up to the hilt. All programs are provided with a set of parameters that enable you to tone back the CPU demands of any given patch. But moving forward, we're confident this module will keep your computer busy for many years to come! We recommend a combination of high processor speeds, a good chunk of memory and a devoted 7200rpm eSata, USBII, Thunderbolt, or Firewire audio drive. The more memory you have, the less demand placed on your drive, and having a totally devoted drive gives you the chance to load less into memory and reduce load times. The higher the speed of your CPU, the more capable your computer will be to deal with some of the amazing but complicated scripts we've written.

PCs:
We recommend an i5, or i7 Quad or 8 Core machine with 8 Gig or above memory. Vista 64 or Windows 7. However, it will work with SP2, Pentium or Athlon XP 1.4GHz 1Gig RAM.

MACs:
We recommend a Mac-Pro Intel Based Dual, Quad or 8 Core machine with 8 Gig or above memory. Mac OS 10.6.1 (Snow Leopard). However, we have made the module work satisfactorily on a Mac Mini 2.4 GHz and a MacBook Pro 2.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo.

DRIVES:
Firewire, USBII, or eSata, 7200rpm. Ask your dealer for drives that are suitable for "AV use". We always recommend as small a drive as possible, as the platter will be smaller and the seek time less. The library will eventually take up 25 Gig on your hard drive. If using several large libraries, or a number of Spitfire modules from the same machine, we really recommend having your samples distributed over a number of drives. W highly recommend Lacie eSata or Quadras 7200rpm. Moreover, an exciting development lies in the recent arrival of some amazing solid state (SSD) drives. With seek times reduced to a fraction (0.1ms vs 6-9ms) of what standard drives can offer, we are certain you will be able to reduce your sampler's "pre-load" (page 24) buffer tenfold, meaning you'll be able to load enormous orchestral palettes into a single machine.

HOST:
The Kontakt 4 platform should work comfortably on most commonly found platforms and DAWs. As always make sure you're as up-to-date as you can afford! If you're planning on building or adding Spitfire to an already large orchestral palette, we recommend running your library independently of your DAW, either on your host computer (e.g. via Re-Wire) or on a slave device (e.g.. via Midi or MOL). This will assist your load-in times, and will allow your DAW to do what it does best, sort out all your note ons and note offs! We heartily endorse Plogue Bidule (www.plogue.com) as a virtual rack/ routing system. For more advice and information about setting up please check our website.

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INSTALLATION

Because you're reading this manual, we can presume you have successfully downloaded Plucked Piano. Included in your download email are some detailed installation instructions, please follow these carefully before going any further. We'll see you back here when you're installed!

GETTING STARTED

Before opening Kontakt please make sure you have THE LATEST VERSION OF KONTAKT 4.2.4 OR 5 INSTALLED. 95% of all service enquiries relating to spurious or strange behaviour of our wares are solved by installing the most recent version.

As this is NOT a Kontakt Player Library
YOU WILL NOT SEE THE MODULE IN THE LIBRARY PANE.
Simply navigate to the Plucked Piano via the "File" browser pane.

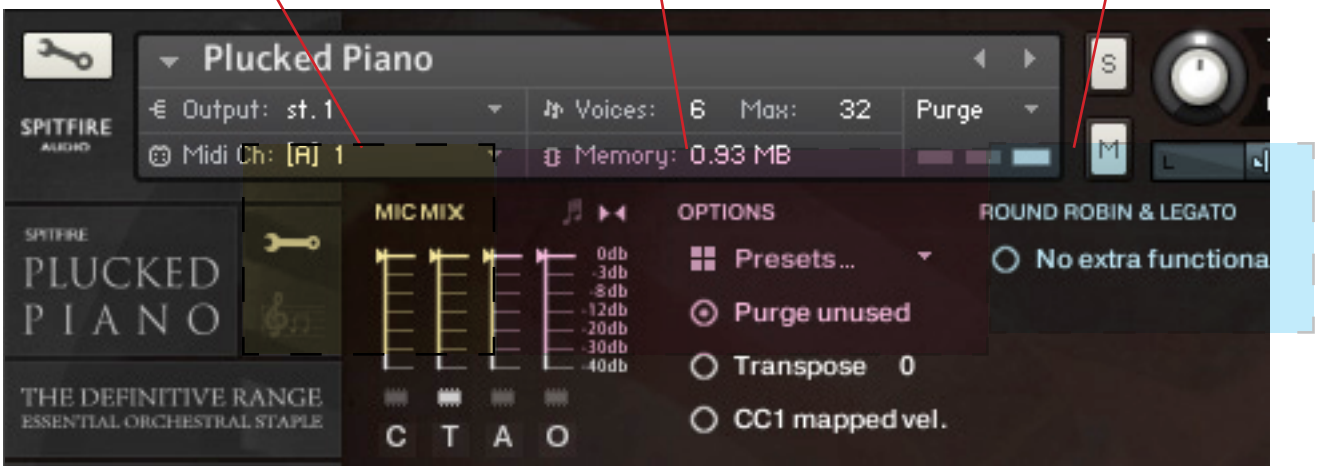
If you have never used Kontakt before we wholeheartedly recommend your familiarise yourself with the basics of patch (or instrument) loading, multi management, outputting and MIDI routing detailed in the Kontakt user-manual provided with your copy of Kontakt, or in the "documentation" folder of your Kontakt file.

THE FRONT PANEL

MIC/ MIX POSITIONS

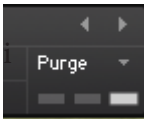
GENERAL CONTROLS

EXPRESSION CONTROLS



ARTICULATIONS AND ADVANCED STAVE

RAM CHIPS - The chips beneath the articulations denote load status of the articulations. If you play an articulation that isn't loaded the front panel will alert you. Click on the memory chip to load.



Make sure Kontakt displays the instrument load status as pictured. If the left hand bar is illuminated and red it's in a queue and hasn't started loading yet, if the middle bar is lit and yellow the instrument is still loading up.

To save on RAM you may wish to unload articulations click off the chip to unload and it will become greyed out.

ARTICULATIONS - Click on these notes to select the different articulations, or indeed press their associated key switches. There are four articulations to choose from; "Direct Mod Wheel Xfade" that mixes between finger pad and Paul's poor nails via CC1 Modulation Wheel control; or "Direct Velocity Controlled", which switches between these two sample sets depending how hard you play. These are both direct ADD signals for the cleanest recording. These two sets have also been recorded onto the pristinely maintained Studer tape machine for that rounded top, tidy bottom and general analogue love! To access these articulations click on the icons with the tape images.

SIDE BAR DISPLAY AND ADVANCE TOOLS

On the left of your articulation stanza is a side bar that displays the name of the articulation you're currently playing. Beneath it are three options:

KEYSWITCH SHIMMIER - This shimmys the position of all the keyswitches left or right by clicking and dragging while holding the mouse button down, convenient if you're creating your own "multi" instruments and don't want to hit keyswitches by mistake.

KEYSWITCH TO CC SELECTOR - Use this to assign a CC controller to act as articulation/ keyswitcher. Click on "CC" and you'll be prompted to move the controller you wish to use in order for the instrument to "learn" how you'd like to select articulations.

ARTICULATION LOCK - Many composers like to have a single articulation loaded to each instance of an instrument. Once you have unloaded all unwanted samples and have settled to your preferred articulation click this to lock so you can't accidentally hit keyswitches and suddenly become mute. This way of working is particularly vital if you're using slave computers where not all UIs will be instantly visible to you (use this in conjunction with the template builder presets).

GENERAL CONTROLS

OPTIONS

PRESETS - This allows you to load predetermined sets of articulations, affectionately called "Brush Sets", quickly and easily to optimise your system speedily for essential articulations, or to start building templates using empty "shells".

PURGE UNUSED - This control keeps unloading any samples you are not using to keep your memory usage as low as possible.

TRANSPOSE - Toggle this on and tweak the number to the right to transpose your instrument. Please note that this is not the same as tuning, the instrument will actually offset the samples to the selected pitch.

CC1 MAPPED VEL(OCITY) - Click this to have velocity controlled dynamics (for the shorts for instance) mapped to CC1 as it is with the longs.

ROUND ROBINS & LEGATO

ROUND ROBINS - This refers to the number of round robins (multiple instances of the same notes that cycle around as you repeatedly play a note) this can be toggled on or off.

RESET FROM F7 - This enables you to control the round robin cycle (so it sounds identical every time you play) toggle on & play the key selected (default F0) to reset.

RESET ON TRANSPORT - As above but resets every time you press play! Genius!

EXPRESSION CONTROLS

Visual representation of the various expression controllers available to you. Right/ ctrl click to reassign/ learn different controller assignments.

DYNAMICS - For use with the velocity controlled patches.

EXPRESSION - (DEFAULT CC11) For "Modwheel XFade" patches. This controls the amount of finger nail versus finger pad!

MICROPHONE/ MIX SETTINGS

Welcome to the wonderful world of Air Studios and the mixes of our chief engineer Jake Jackson.

Use the blobs beneath the faders to load/unload different microphones and the faders above to tweak the balance of them. Turning a fader all the way down will also unload the mics, conversely turning the fader back up will reload.

MICROPHONES / MIXES

Right/ Ctrl click on mics to change Kontakt channel/output assignment.

C - Close mics. A selection of valve mics placed for optimum focus close to the instruments. This mic control is great to add in for added definition and at times a bit of "rounding of sound", in isolation it can be a way of achieving a more intimate or pop-music style sound.

T - Tree. This refers to the "Decca" tree of three mics placed above the conductors podium. In the case of Albion; 3 priceless vintage Neumann M50s. These are placed to give the ultimate sound of the band, and hall. These are the default mic position that loads in with each patch.

A - Ambient. A set of condenser mics placed high up in the gallery, away from the band. This mic position gives a massive amount of stereo spread and room sound over the band. Great mixed in with the other mics, but also ideal fed to your Ls & Rs speaker sends for true surround information.

O - Outriggers A set of vintage AKG C20s placed wide apart to the left and right of the tree. These give a similar balance of room and band but with a broader stereo spread. The effect of this mic is somewhere between the tree and ambient mics.

PLUCKED PIANO MERCURY SYNTH

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10.

THE PLUCKED PIANO MERCURY SYNTH

Although these sound excellent out of the box, we've also given you an easy to use and ingenious front panel.

1. Lo & Hi Pass Filters

LPF = Low, HPF = Hi. For some, a counter intuitive industry standard in titling. Adjust the graph on the LPF to chop off the top end, HPF to chop off the bottom. So if you want to reduce your fizzing synth sound to a muted sub tone just drag the LPF graph from right to left.

2. Wobble Amount

Three modulator windows that give you wobble, or sometimes WAB WAB WAB! Adjust the AMT to effect the amount of WAB WAB.

3. Wobble Frequency

Adjust the graph to change the frequency or speed of your wobbles. For tempo sync'd modulators this will tune coarsely to provide you with 8th triplet, 16th, etc etc.

4. A.D.S.R.

Attack, **D**ecay, **S**ustain **R**elease envelope. These knobs will adjust the shape of the sound from a volume point of view. Adjust attack to make the sound come thudding in or gradually fade in. Adjust release to make the sound go from a sharp end or off to a gradual decay. For an 808 style bass pull up one of the subbier sounds and pull the attack all the way to the right. Then release to about mid way (to taste) and play some short notes.

5. FX Parameter Display

We've pre-loaded a selection of FX. Activate by clicking the FX icons along this bar.

6. Portamento Glide On/ Off Toggle

Click this to make the sound monophonic (so you only can play one note at a time) and to activate the portamento glide function.

7. Portamento Glide Amount

Now that your Glide toggle is on, hold one key down and whilst holding press another. Because you're in monophonic mode the sound will transition from the first pitch you depressed to the second, this fader controls the time this transition takes.

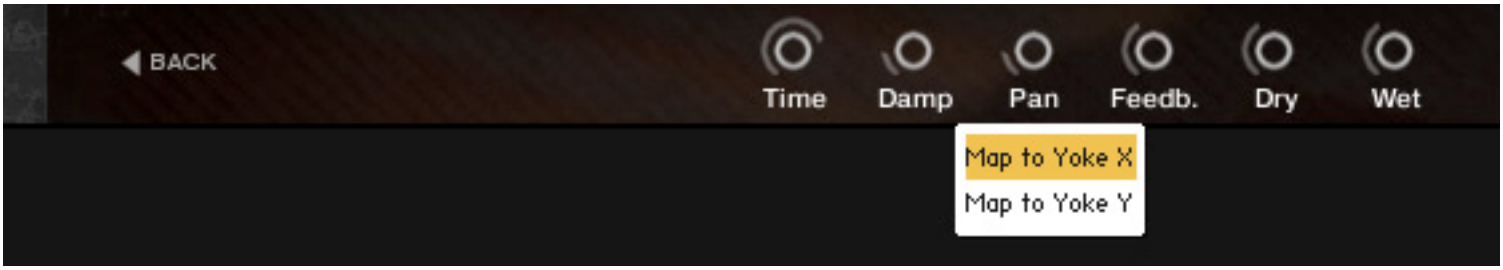
8. Yoke X&Y FX Selector

The yoke (10.) is a dual FX controller that adjusts your FX parameters in real time for fantastic sequencing options. Y = vertical controller, X = horizontal. Scroll down to select which FX you wish to control.

9. Yoke X&Y FX Parameter Selector

Determines which parameter from your selected FX you wish to map to the X or Y yoke controller.

You can also alter the FX parameters further and map them directly to the Yoke controller (right/ ctrl click) by accessing the additional FX parameter Bar; Command/ Right Click on the FX Icon you'd like to acces additional parameters for.



A QUICK THANKS

Christian & Paul would like to thank the cabal of genius assembled herein. To Dominic Kelly and the searing talents of the English Session Orchestra, to Alison Burton and the whole of the Air-Studios team. To Jake Jackson for wrangling and controlling this beast. To the remarkable talents, immense intellect and invention of Stanley Gabriel, and Blake Robinson, oh and of course Paul Thomson's poor finger nails.

Most of all we'd like to thank the amazing support and loyalty of our user-base, our Facebook friends and everyone on VI Control.

We are in the same boat as all of you. We're not software developers by trade, so appreciate your honesty in paying your way to be a part of our family and not distributing this illegally. But more importantly, if you have any ideas or criticism please let us know directly via our website and in a constructive manner . You never know, you just may have thought of something that we hadn't considered. We want to make our entire range the best there is, and we rely on you to help us achieve that..... With thanks.

Christian & Paul.

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